AVATAR

The Last Airbender

Show #108

BOOK ONE: WATER
CHAPTER EIGHT: "Winter Solstice Part 2: Avatar Roku"

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As Broadcast script
March 31, 2005

ACT ONE

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

(NOTE: This is the same village from episode 107. The episode begins a few hours after the previous episode ends.)

CLOSE ON: APPA. He BELLOWS. TRUCK OUT TO REVEAL: AANG tugs on Appa's reins, trying to get him to move.

AANG
(pulling on the reins)
Let's go, Appa. Come on, boy.

APPA
(MOURNFUL BELLOW)

Appa sits his haunch on the ground. He's not going anywhere.

AANG
Look, I'm sorry, but Katara and Sokka aren't coming to the Fire Nation with us. If they got hurt... I'd never forgive myself.

Aang pulls on the reins again.

AANG (CONT'D)
So get your big butt off the ground and let's go!

SOKKA (O.S.)
I think his big butt is trying to tell you something.

Aang turns to see KATARA, SOKKA, and MOMO come out of the central hall, followed by the village LEADER, the OLD WANDERER, and a few other curious VILLAGERS (all from episode 107.)

KATARA
Please don't go, Aang. The world can't afford to lose you to the Fire Nation... neither can I.

INSERT: Aang's vision of Sozin's Comet, from episode 107.

AANG
But, I have to talk to Avatar Roku to find out what my vision means.

(MORE)

AANG(CONT'D)
I need to get to the Fire Temple before the sun sets on the solstice. That's today!

Aang Airbends himself up onto Appa's head and grabs the reins. Katara and Sokka step in front of Appa, blocking his path.

KATARA
We're not letting you go into the Fire Nation, Aang.

Aang looks disappointed.

SOKKA
At least, not without your friends. We got your back.

Momo CHITTERS. Katara and Sokka smile. Aang is touched by his friend's loyalty. Appa BELLOWS HAPPILY and licks Sokka.

SOKKA (CONT'D)
Ewww.

The Leader approaches them and hands them a sack of food and supplies.

LEADER
It's a long journey to the crescent island -- you'll have to fly fast to have any chance of making it before sundown. Good luck.

AANG
Thank you for your--

LEADER
(urgent)
Go!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

The Village Leader steps out onto his front porch looking extremely tired. He rubs his head and looks concerned.

LEADER
(TROUBLED SIGH)

ZUKO (O.S.)
Having trouble sleeping?

REVEAL that ZUKO is standing behind him. UNCLE sits on a rhino nearby (NOTE: Uncle looks the same as he did at the end of 107 - broken shackles on his wrists, etc.)

The Leader turns around, STARTLED.

LEADER
(STARTLED NOISE)

ZUKO
Seen the Avatar lately?

Zuko grabs the Leader and pushes him back inside.

EXT. SKY OVER OCEAN - DAWN

Aang sits on Appa's head. Katara and Sokka are in the saddle acting as lookouts.

The first sliver of sun peeks over the horizon, ILLUMINATING Aang's face. He looks worried. He pulls the reins.

AANG
Come on, boy, we've got a long way to go. Faster!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ZUKO'S SHIP - NOON

Zuko stands on the tower, looking through the telescope. The sunlight ILLUMINATES his face. Uncle, now in his robes, lectures him.

UNCLE
Sailing into Fire Nation waters... Of all the foolish things you've done in your sixteen years, Prince Zuko, this is the most foolish!

ZUKO
I have no choice, Uncle.

UNCLE
Have you completely forgotten that the Fire Lord banished you? What if you're caught?

ZUKO
I’m chasing the Avatar. My father will understand why I’m returning home.

UNCLE
You give him too much credit. My brother is not the understanding type.

Zuko spots the bison in his telescope.

ZUKO
There they are!
(then)
Helmsman, full steam ahead!

EXT. ON APPA - CONTINUOUS

Katara and Sokka continue their lookout duties. Katara looks to the Northeast and sees black smoke on the horizon.

KATARA
Aang, we got trouble!

SOKKA
Yeah, and it’s gaining fast!

EXT. ZUKO’S SHIP - CONTINUOUS

Zuko and his soldiers stand next to a trebuchet - a large CATAPULT DEVICE. A huge mound of STINKY GARBAGE sits in the catapult. The soldiers pour a tar-like substance over the garbage. Uncle wafts the air.

UNCLE
Ugh... really, Prince Zuko. Couldn’t you shoot them down with something more fragrant?

Zuko punches fire and the mound ignites. He backs away.

ZUKO
On my mark.
(beat)
Fire!

The soldiers cut the catapults ropes with their swords. The catapult releases, hurling the flaming garbage mound straight at Appa.

EXT. ON APPA - CONTINUOUS

KATARA
Fireball!

AANG
I'm on it!

Aang pulls the reins and Appa rolls to the side, narrowly avoiding the fireball. It leaves behind a stinky trail. Everyone's noses scrunch up in disgust.

KATARA
We have to get out of Zuko's range, before he shoots another hot stinker at us!

SOKKA
Can't you make Appa go any faster?

AANG
Yeah! But there's just one little problem...

EXT. ZUKO'S SHIP - SIMULTANEOUS

ZUKO
...A blockade?

WIDE ANGLE OVER THE OCEAN: a dozen huge Fire Navy ships patrol the waters, stretching out for miles in each direction. Zuko and Appa head straight for them.

BACK ON: Zuko and Uncle. Zuko stares at the blockade, deciding what to do.

UNCLE
Technically, we're still in Earth Kingdom waters. Turn back now, and they cannot arrest you.

EXT. ON APPA - CONTINUOUS

Aang stares at the blockade, a worried look on his face.

AANG
If we fly North, we can go around the Fire Nation ships and avoid the blockade. It's the only way--

KATARA
There’s no time!

Aang looks at Katara and Sokka, then at the blockade.

AANG
This is exactly why I didn’t want you to come. It’s too dangerous.

KATARA
And that’s exactly why we’re here!

SOKKA
(determined)
Let’s run this blockade.

Aang looks at them and nods, gaining strength from his friends.

AANG
Appa, yip-yip!

Appa picks up speed.

EXT. ZUKO’S SHIP - CONTINUOUS

Zuko watches the bison.

ZUKO
He’s not turning around.

UNCLE
Please, Prince Zuko. If the Fire Nation captures you, there is nothing I can do. Do not follow the Avatar.

CLOSE ON: Zuko. He knows what he must do.

ZUKO
I’m sorry, Uncle.
(to his crew)
Run the blockade!

EXT. FIRE NAVY SHIP - CONTINUOUS

ANGLE THROUGH TELESCOPE: The telescope moves from Appa to Zuko’s ship.

VOICE (O.S.)
The Avatar and the banished Prince.
This must be my lucky day.

The telescope lowers, revealing COMMANDER ZHAO. Zhao stands in front of a row of trebuchets facing East (similar to the one on Zuko's ship, but bigger and scarier looking.) A FIRE NATION CAPTAIN approaches.

FIRE NATION CAPTAIN
Commander Zhao, what are your orders?

COMMANDER ZHAO
Shoot the bison down, captain.

FIRE NATION CAPTAIN
But there's a Fire Navy ship out there, sir. One of our own. What if it's hit?

COMMANDER ZHAO
So be it. It belongs to a traitor.
(to the crew)
Ignite!

The Firebenders light the tar-covered balls.

COMMANDER ZHAO (CONT'D)
Launch!

The soldiers cut the ropes. The catapults release, launching ten flaming, Appa-sized balls into the sky.

EXT. ON APPA - CONTINUOUS

The fireballs streak through the sky. Appa barrel-rolls, dodging them.

One of the fireballs singes Appa's hair. Appa BELLOWS ANGRILY.

AANG
Appa, are you okay?!

EXT. ZUKO'S SHIP - CONTINUOUS

The fireballs land all around Zuko's ship, creating huge waves. One of the fireballs hits the side of the ship, scorching it's side. The waves knock it around like a toy in a bathtub. Zuko and his men are thrown to the deck.

Black smoke plumes up from the engine room and out of the smokestacks. An ENGINEER runs onto the deck.

ENGINEER
Prince Zuko, the engines are damaged. We need to stop and make repairs.

ZUKO
Do not stop this ship!

EXT. FIRE NAVY SHIP - CONTINUOUS

COMMANDER ZHAO
Launch!

The trebuchets launch fire balls from Commander Zhao’s ship towards Appa and the kids.

EXT. ON APPA - CONTINUOUS

Appa forges on, dodging and weaving to avoid the rest of the fireballs.

AANG
Sokka!

EXT. FIRE NAVY SHIP - CONTINUOUS

COMMANDER ZHAO
Ready... Fire!

EXT. ON APPA - CONTINUOUS

He flies over and away from the blockade.

AANG
We made it!

Aang turns to see Katara and Sokka’s SCARED FACES.

SOKKA
(deadpan)
We got into the Fire Nation.
Great.

EXT. FIRE NAVY SHIP - CONTINUOUS

Commander Zhao watches as the bison becomes a dot in the sky.

FIRE NATION CAPTAIN
Where do you think the Avatar is headed, sir?

Zhao turns his attention to Zuko's ship.

COMMANDER ZHAO
I'm not sure. But I bet a certain banished Prince will know.

EXT. ZUKO'S SHIP - CONTINUOUS

Zuko stands on the deck like a one-man army. Two ships (one of them Zhao's) move toward each other to block Zuko's path.

UNCLE
We're on a collision course!

ZUKO
We can make it.

EXT. FIRE NAVY SHIP - CONTINUOUS

Zuko's ship, still pluming smoke, heads for the blockade. Zhao barks an order to his captain.

FIRE NATION CAPTAIN
The boarding party is ready to apprehend Prince Zuko, sir.

COMMANDER ZHAO
Wait... cut the engines and let them pass!

FIRE NATION CAPTAIN
(confused)
Sir?

EXT. ZUKO'S SHIP - CONTINUOUS

Zhao's ship slows, allowing Zuko's ship to safely pass by. As the two ships pass each other, Zuko and Zhao make eye contact, each man sizing up his opponent. Uncle rubs his chin curiously.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OCEAN - LONG JOURNEY MONTAGE

We dissolve through a few shots of Appa flying through the sky. We see sunlight change as it gets later.

EXT. ESTABLISHING - CRESCENT ISLAND - LATE AFTERNOON

A volcanic island on the outskirts of the Fire Nation. Appa flies toward it.

AANG (V.O.)
There it is! The island where Roku's dragon took me.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CRESCENT ISLAND - LATER

Lava rivers cut paths through the black earth. Vegetation is minimal. Appa lands behind a ridge. The kids get off. Aang hugs Appa's nose.

AANG
You did it, buddy! Nice flying!

Appa rolls over and GROANS. Katara rubs his belly.

KATARA
Aww, you must be tired.

SOKKA
(stretching out)
No, I'm good. Refreshed and ready to fight some Firebenders.

KATARA
I was talking to Appa.

SOKKA
(immediately defensive)
Well, I was talking to Momo.

Momo looks up, confused.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FIRE NATION TEMPLE - A SHORT TIME LATER

A multi-tiered building sits atop a craggy hill, surrounded by lava. PAN DOWN TO: The kids and Momo who make their way up the hill, jumping from rock to rock to avoid the lava. The kids regard the temple with a look of fear and amazement.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FIRE NATION TEMPLE - MOMENTS LATER

The kids and Momo huddle behind a wall outside the temple.

SOKKA
I don't see any guards.

KATARA
The Fire Nation must have abandoned the temple when Avatar Roku died.

Aang looks to the West and sees the Sun nearing the horizon.

AANG
It's almost sundown, we better hurry.

The kids quickly run up the path to the temple and enter.

INT. FIRE NATION TEMPLE - MAIN HALL - CONTINUOUS

The kids cautiously enter the dark hall. They walk for a beat, then Sokka stops them.

SOKKA
(sotto voce)
Wait! I think I heard something...

They all stand still, perfect silence for a moment. The camera sweeps around 180 degrees. Five robed, creepy looking old men step out of the shadows behind them, sending a shiver up their spines.

GREAT SAGE
We are the Fire Sages, guardians of the temple of the Avatar.

AANG
(relieved)
Great. I <u>am</u> the Avatar!

GREAT SAGE
We know.

The great Sage punches flame, filling frame.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. FIRE NATION TEMPLE - MAIN HALL

The five Fire Sages surround the kids. The Sages attack using Firebending. Aang uses his staff to deflect the blows and protect his friends.

AANG
I'll hold them off! Run!

Katara, Sokka, and Momo run down a hallway. Aang does a huge Airbending move that knocks the Sages back, giving him time to escape.

GREAT SAGE
If the Avatar contacts Roku, there's no telling how powerful the boy will become. Split up and find him!

The Sages all run off in different directions.

INT. FIRE NATION TEMPLE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The kids run down the hall.

AANG
Follow me!

SOKKA
Do you know where you're going?

AANG
Nope.

The kids round a corner and come face to face with one of the Sages -- SHYU. At age sixty, he is the youngest of the Sages.

AANG (CONT'D)
Wrong way!

They turn and head down another passageway.

SHYU
Come back!

The kids turn another corner and come to the end of the hallway. It's a dead end! Shyu slowly walks toward them. Aang stands in front of Katara and Sokka, his staff at the ready.

SHYU (CONT'D)
I don't want to fight you. I am a friend.

SOKKA
Firebenders aren't our friends.

SHYU
I know why you're here, Avatar.

AANG
You do?

SHYU
Yes. You wish to speak to Avatar Roku. I can take you to him.

AANG
(skeptical)
How?

Shyu takes a Firebending stance and punches fire at a duct in the wall. The stone wall slides open, revealing a SECRET PASSAGEWAY.

SHYU
This way.

GREAT SAGE (O.S.)
Find him.

Aang takes a beat to consider this.

SHYU
Time is running out. Quickly!

Katara nods to Aang -- they have no choice but to trust this guy. Shyu ushers the kids into the passageway. As Shyu enters, the door slides shut behind him.

EXT. ZUKO'S SHIP - WATCHTOWER - SIMULTANEOUS

Zuko stands on the tower. A huge trail of smoke spills from the ship.

ZUKO
What's he up to, Uncle? Why didn't Commander Zhao arrest me?

UNCLE
Because he wants to follow you. He knows you'll lead him to the prize you're both after - the Avatar.

Zuko gets an idea.

ZUKO
If Zhao wants to follow our trail of smoke, then that's exactly what I'll let him do.

EXT. FIRE NATION TEMPLE - ESTABLISHING - LATE AFTERNOON

INT. FIRE NATION TEMPLE - CATACOMBS - CONTINUOUS

Shyu leads the kids through a creepy, underground passageway. It is lit only by the rivulets of lava that flow down the walls. Momo sits on Aang's shoulder.

SHYU
Avatar Roku once called this temple his home. He formed these secret passages out of the magma.

AANG
Did you know Avatar Roku?

SHYU
No, but my grandfather knew him. Many generations of Fire Sages guarded this temple long before me. We all have a strong spiritual connection to this place.

AANG
Is that how you knew I was coming?

SHYU
A few weeks ago, an amazing thing occurred. The statue of Avatar Roku - its eyes began to glow.

KATARA
That's when we were at the Air Temple. Avatar Roku's eyes were glowing there too.

SHYU
At that moment, we knew you had returned to the world.

AANG
If this is the Avatar's temple, why did the Sages attack me?

SHYU
Things have changed. In the past, the Sages were loyal only to the Avatar. When Roku died, the Sages eagerly waited for the next Avatar to return, but he never came.

AANG
(realizing)
They were waiting for me.

SOKKA
Hey don't feel bad, you're only a hundred years late.

Aang gives him a look.

SHYU
They lost hope the Avatar would ever return. When Fire Lord Sozin began the war, my grandfather and the other Sages were forced to follow him.

Shyu stops walking and kneels down in front of Aang.

SHYU (CONT'D)
I never wanted to serve the Fire Lord. When I learned you were coming, I knew I would have to betray the other Sages.

AANG
Thank you for helping me.

Shyu stands and continues down the passageway. At the end of the corridor Shyu indicates a winding flight of steps.

SHYU
We'll follow these stairs to the sanctuary. Once you're inside, wait for the light to hit Avatar Roku's statue. Only then will you be able to speak with him.

CUT TO:

INT. FIRE NATION TEMPLE - OUTSIDE SANCTUARY DOORS - MOMENTS LATER

A door slides open. Shyu peeks out and sees that the coast is clear. They all come out, then Shyu notices something...

SHYU
(GASP) No.

ANGLE ON: The sanctuary doors. Similar to the Air temple doors in episode 103, these doors are metal with an elaborate opening mechanism. Shyu looks devastated.

AANG
Shyu, what's wrong?

SHYU
The sanctuary doors... they're closed.

KATARA
Can't you just open them with Firebending? Like you opened that other door?

SHYU
No. Only a fully realized Avatar is powerful enough to open this door alone. Otherwise, the Sages must open the doors together with five simultaneous fire blasts.

Aang looks disappointed. Sokka looks at the torch lamps that line the walls.

SOKKA
Five fire blasts, huh? I think I can help you out.

EXT. ZUKO'S SHIP - SIMULTANEOUS

Smoke from the engine damage envelopes Zuko's ship. Zuko stands in his SKIFF - a smaller boat. Uncle stands nearby.

ZUKO
Uncle, keep heading North. Zhao will follow the smoke trail while I use it as a cover.

Zuko and his skiff are lowered into the water. They disappear into the smoke.

EXT. FIRE NAVY SHIP - CONTINUOUS

Commander Zhao watches Zuko’s ship through the telescope. He does not see Zuko’s skiff.

INT. FIRE NATION TEMPLE - OUTSIDE SANCTUARY DOORS - LATER

CLOSE ON: A small, round animal skin casing. Sokka pours some oil from one of the lamps into it and then seals the top.

SOKKA
This is a little trick I picked up from my father. I seal the lamp oil inside an animal skin casing. Shyu lights the oil-soaked twine and... tah-dah! Fake Firebending.

KATARA
(impressed)
You’ve really outdone yourself this time, Sokka.

SHYU
This might actually work.

Sokka places the ‘bombs’ into the five pipe openings. The kids hide behind a stone column.

SHYU (CONT’D)
The Sages will hear the explosions, so as soon as they go off you rush in.

KATARA
It’s almost sunset, are you ready?

AANG
Definitely.

Shyu snaps his fingers, sending a spark that lights the five fuses simultaneously. The ‘fuses’ burn their way toward the door and into the door mechanism. Everyone plugs their ears in anticipation of the blast. KA-BOOM! The ‘bombs’ go off with a blast of fire and smoke.

Aang sprints to the doors as the smoke begins to clear. He pulls on them with all his strength but the doors don’t open.

AANG (CONT’D)
They’re still locked!

SHYU
It didn’t work.

Sokka and Katara look at each other - what now? Aang hangs his head, devastated.

EXT. ESTABLISHING - FIRE NATION TEMPLE - SUNSET

The sun hangs just over the horizon.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. ESTABLISHING - FIRE NATION TEMPLE - SUNSET

The sun hangs just over the horizon.

INT. FIRE NATION TEMPLE - OUTSIDE SANCTUARY DOORS - CONTINUOUS

Aang, Shyu, Katara, Sokka, and Momo all stand outside the doors which are SCORCHED and SOOTY from the blast. Aang frantically punches and kicks four air blasts at the door.

AANG
(frustrated)
Why... won't... it... open?!

Katara grabs Aang trying to help him get a hold of himself.

KATARA
Aang, stop, there's nothing else we can do.

AANG
I'm sorry I put you through all this for nothing.

Sokka runs his finger over the sooty doors.

SOKKA
I don't get it. That blast looked as strong as any Firebending I've seen.

KATARA
(getting an idea)
Sokka, you're a genius!

Katara hugs Sokka. Sokka has a confused smile.

AANG
Wait, how is Sokka a genius? His plan didn't even work.

SOKKA
Come on Aang, let her dream.

KATARA
You're right. Sokka's plan didn't work. But it looks like it did.

AANG
Did the definition of genius change in the last hundred years?

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. FIRE NATION TEMPLE - OUTSIDE SANCTUARY DOORS - MOMENTS LATER

The kids are gone. Shyu quickly ushers the four other Sages towards the doors.

SHYU
Come quickly! The Avatar has entered the sanctuary!

GREAT SAGE
How did he get in?

SHYU
I don't know. But look at the scorch marks.

Shyu indicates the SCORCHED DOORS.

SHYU (CONT'D)
And down there!

Shyu points to the floor where light shines out from a small crack at the base of the door. A SHADOW passes by.

GREAT SAGE
He's inside. Open the doors immediately! Before he contacts Avatar Roku!

ANGLE ON: Aang, hiding behind a wall, watching the events unfold.

BACK ON: The doors. The Fire Sages stand in a row in front of the door. They take a stance, and then punch fire into the five openings. Flames shoot through the pipes and trigger the lock mechanism. The doors slowly slide open. (NOTE: As the doors open, you can see a row of interlocking spikes.)

As the Sages follow the shadow that was visible beneath the door to its source, they see it belongs to a soot-covered Momo!

GREAT SAGE (CONT'D)
It's the Avatar's lemur. He must have crawled through the pipes -- we've been tricked!

Suddenly, Momo SCREECHES and flies out of the room, landing on the Great Sage's head. He stumbles around trying to get Momo off.

GREAT SAGE (CONT'D)
Ahh!

In the moment of surprise, Sokka, Katara, and Shyu jump out from their hiding places and trip up the other Sages. With various cheap shots, the kids momentarily distract the Sages so Aang can make his move into the room.

SHYU
Now, Aang!

But Aang doesn't come.

KATARA
Aang, now's your chance!

Nothing happens for a beat. Then Zuko steps out from behind the wall, with Aang in a kung fu submission grip.

ZUKO
The Avatar is coming with me.

The moment of distraction the kids created is over. The Sages recover, grabbing Katara and Sokka.

ZUKO (CONT'D)
Close the doors, quickly!

Two Sages push the heavy doors closed, the interlocking spikes moving closer and closer together. Shyu goes to stop them but the Great Sage knocks him back with a fire blast.

Aang does a huge Airbending move, knocking Zuko away. He turns to rescue Katara from her assailant, but as soon as he makes eye contact with her...

KATARA
(determined, re: the closing doors)
Go.

Aang considers this for a beat, grits his teeth and...

WHOOSH! He runs full speed at the doors and leaps over all the Sages' heads, deftly dodging a fireball, and...

SLO MO: at the last second, Aang slips through the doors as the spikes come together. The doors SLAM shut with Aang inside!

KATARA (CONT'D)
He made it!

A POWERFUL LIGHT emanates from the doors, then fades away. Katara only has a moment to enjoy the victory before realizing she and Sokka are left alone facing the angry Sages and Zuko.

INT. SANCTUARY - CONTINUOUS

The WINTER SOLSTICE SUNLIGHT SHINES through a gigantic ruby built into the wall. (NOTE: this is the same room that Roku's dragon took Aang to in episode 107.) The light shines on the statue's torso, making its way towards Roku's head.

AANG
The light hits the statue and I talk to Roku. So why isn't anything happening?

ANGLE ON: The statue. The light from the ruby continues up the statue. Nothing happens. Aang stands in front of the statue, a confused look on his face.

INT. FIRE NATION TEMPLE - OUTSIDE SANCTUARY DOORS - SIMULTANEOUS

Four of the Fire Sages, and Zuko filling in for Shyu, assume stances, and then punch fire into the five openings of the door. Flames shoot through the pipes as before, but then dissipate and fizzle out.

ZUKO
Why isn't it working?! It's sealed shut.

GREAT SAGE
It must have been the light. Avatar Roku doesn't want us inside.

INT. SANCTUARY - SIMULTANEOUS

Aang looks at Roku's statue.

AANG
(frustrated)
Why isn’t anything happening?

Aang begins walking the Ba Gua circle around the statue.

AANG (CONT’D)
I don’t know what I’m doing! All I know is Airbending. Please, Avatar Roku, talk to me!

Aang turns and suddenly he is on top of...

EXT. MISTY MOUNTAINTOP

The room has disappeared. In front of Aang stands the real AVATAR ROKU. Roku speaks with a deep, powerful voice.

AVATAR ROKU
(with a smile on his face)
It’s good to see you, Aang. What took you so long?

Aang looks up in awe.

INT. FIRE NATION TEMPLE - OUTSIDE SANCTUARY DOORS - SIMULTANEOUS

Katara, Sokka, and Momo are chained to the pillars in the hallway. The Sages stand in front of them. Zuko stands in front of Shyu.

ZUKO
Why did you help the Avatar?

SHYU
Because it was once the Sages’ duty. It is still our duty.

A slow CLAPPING SOUND echoes through the hall. Commander Zhao steps out of the shadows followed by a dozen Firebenders.

COMMANDER ZHAO
What a moving and heart-felt performance. I’m certain the Fire Lord will understand when you explain why you betrayed him.

GREAT SAGE
(bowing)
Commander Zhao.

COMMANDER ZHAO
And Prince Zuko. It was a noble effort, but your little smoke screen didn't work.

The Firebenders take Shyu and Zuko into custody.

COMMANDER ZHAO (CONT'D)
Two traitors in one day. The Fire Lord will be pleased.

ZUKO
You're too late Zhao. The Avatar's inside and the doors are sealed.

COMMANDER ZHAO
No matter. Sooner or later he has to come out.

Katara and Sokka look at each other, worried for Aang.

EXT. MISTY MOUNTAINTOP - SIMULTANEOUS

Aang stands in front of Avatar Roku.

AVATAR ROKU
I have something very important to tell you, Aang. That is why, when you were in the spirit world, I sent my dragon to find you.

AANG
Is it about that vision? The one of the comet?

AVATAR ROKU
Yes.

AANG
What does it mean?

AVATAR ROKU
100 years ago, Fire Lord Sozin used that comet to begin the war. He and his Firebending army harnessed its incredible power and dealt a deadly first strike against the other nations.

AANG
So the comet made them stronger?

AVATAR ROKU
Yes. Stronger than you could even imagine.

AANG
But that happened a hundred years ago. What does the comet have to do with the war now?

AVATAR ROKU
Listen carefully. Sozin's comet will return by the end of this summer. And Fire Lord Ozai will use its power to finish the war once and for all. If he succeeds, even the Avatar won't be able to restore balance to the world.

CLOSE ON: Aang, taking this in.

AVATAR ROKU (CONT'D)
Aang, you must defeat the Fire Lord before the comet arrives.

AANG
But I haven't even started learning Waterbending, not to mention Earth and Fire.

AVATAR ROKU
Mastering the elements takes years of discipline and practice. But if the world is to survive, you must do it by summer's end.

Off Aang's reaction...

CUT TO:

INT. FIRE NATION TEMPLE - OUTSIDE SANCTUARY DOORS

Zuko, Shyu, Sokka, Katara, and Momo are all tied up and surrounded by Firebenders. Zhao's Firebenders are lined up in front of the doors. Several more soldiers and Firebenders line the walls of the temple, standing at the ready.

COMMANDER ZHAO
(speaking to the troops)
When those doors open, unleash all your firepower.

ANGLE ON: Katara and Sokka.

KATARA
How's Aang going to make it out of this?

SOKKA
How are we going to make it out of this?

EXT. MISTY MOUNTAINTOP - SIMULTANEOUS

AANG
What if I can't master all the elements in time? What if I fail?

AVATAR ROKU
(knowingly)
I know you can do it, Aang. For you have done it before...

Aang and Roku smile at each other -- two kindred souls.

AVATAR ROKU (CONT'D)
The solstice is ending. We must go our separate ways, for now.

AANG
But I won't be able to come back to the temple. What if I have questions? How will I talk to you?

AVATAR ROKU
I am a part of you. When you need to talk to me again, you will find a way.

INTERCUT: Fire Navy ships surround the island, Firebenders are lined up outside the sanctuary doors.

AVATAR ROKU (CONT'D)
A great danger awaits you at the temple. I can help you face the threat, but only if you are ready.

AANG
(long beat)
I'm ready.

Mist envelops them both and they disappear from the mountaintop.

INT. FIRE NATION TEMPLE - OUTSIDE SANCTUARY DOORS - CONTINUOUS

The same intense light that sealed the doors, shines again, and the doors open. Mist billows out. Everyone watches with great anticipation.

COMMANDER ZHAO
Ready!

The Firebenders take their stances.

A pair of GLOWING EYES shine out from the mist.

KATARA
No, Aang!

COMMANDER ZHAO
Fire!!

Simultaneously, all the Firebenders (including Zhao) unleash their Firebending attacks at their target.

But it's not Aang who steps out of the mist... it's Roku. Roku absorbs the massive attack that has been launched against him.

SHYU
Avatar Roku!

Shyu bows his head in respect. Katara nudges Sokka and they follow suit.

Roku takes a deep stance, and with a huge sweep of his arm, knocks Zhao and the Firebenders over like dominoes. The same blow shatters the chains that bind Katara and Sokka.

Zuko takes the opportunity to break away from his captors and run out of the temple.

The temple begins to shake. Roku powerfully draws lava up through the floor. The floor ruptures in many places and lava begins to bubble up into the temple.

The Sages turn and flee as do Zhao and the remaining Firebenders.

SHYU (CONT'D)
(to Katara and Sokka)
Avatar Roku is going to destroy the temple! We have to get out of here!

KATARA
Not without Aang!

INTERCUT: The WINTER SOLSTICE LIGHT LEAVES Avatar Roku's statue.

BACK ON: Avatar Roku. The mist envelops him again and when it dissipates, Aang stands in his place. The glow in his eyes and tattoos FADE OFF. Katara and Sokka run up and grab him as he collapses.

SOKKA
We got your back.

AANG
Thanks.
(noticing)
Where's Shyu?

KATARA
I don't know.

The kids take off, running down the stairs as lava shoots up.

EXT. TEMPLE - CONTINUOUS

The kids run out of the temple. Appa lands and the kids run up his back, into the saddle. Appa takes off as lava shoots up everywhere.

In dramatic fashion, the temple crumbles as it SINKS INTO THE LAVA.

EXT. FIRE NAVY SHIP - DECK - CONTINUOUS

The four Sages and Shyu have been captured by Zhao's Firebenders. They all watch Appa fly away into the distance. A bruised and bloody Zhao takes out his anger on the five Sages.

COMMANDER ZHAO
(furious)
No Prince. No Avatar. Apparently, the only thing I do have, is five traitors.

GREAT SAGE
But Commander, only Shyu helped the Avatar.

COMMANDER ZHAO
Save your stories for the Fire Lord. As far as I'm concerned, you're all guilty.
(to captain)
Take them to the prison hold.

Zhao storms off. The Sages are taken away.

EXT. ZUKO'S SKIFF - CONTINUOUS

Zuko watches Appa fly away - the Avatar has gotten away from him again.

EXT. SKY - ON APPA - CONTINUOUS

Aang, Sokka, and Katara all sit in the saddle. It's quiet. Aang sits alone, lost in thought. Katara and Sokka aren't quite sure what to say. After a few beats, Katara slides up to Aang, puts her hand on his shoulder, then hugs him. Another beat passes, and Sokka puts his arm around Aang. Then, Momo lands on Aang's head and softly CHITTERS.

FADE OUT:

END OF SHOW